SOUTH VIET NAM In Struggle

6th Year — February 14, 1972

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Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom

HO CHI MINH

Tết 1972

Copy 1972 JUN 14

In Memoriam My Older Sister

FIVE years have elapsed since you passed away. Since then I have never ceased thinking of you, of your tragic death from a shell splinter which hit your lung.

Five years ago, one of the early days of the year like today, you fell when you were cooking the afternoon meal, still holding in your hand a piece of firewood to poke the fire. You were weltering in your blood and your only son was wounded in the shoulder.

Since you departed from this world, there has been no great change: the sun continues to shine on bamboo groves, the wind to shake banana leaves and the water of the canal to flow quietly.

With your death has ended a life of drudgery with which you had to put up daily and hourly.

Since you breathed your last, the house you lived in has crumbled down, the furniture has been shattered and many of our neighbours have lost limb and life or home.

One month after your death, our hamlet was destroyed by 156 bombs and big quantities of toxic chemicals, 196 people were killed, 800 others made homeless had to wander for food, 102 children turned into waifs and strays whose crying rent our heart.

As for me, your younger sister, I have since then led a dreadful life in this "swanky" Saigon: I didn't expect my life as an orphan to be drenched in so many tears.

Darling, this war is dragging on, American bombs and shells are still pouring on our native village.

I still remember the day when you carried me across the plain in our flight from the enemy; the day when, taking refuge in an underground during a bombing, you spanked me because I had crawled out of the trench door. Of all that only memories blurred by time remain since you left me by myself on this war-torn land. Our relatives and you longed for a genuine peace, but our village has never known a day without gunreports and our land is still writhing in agony.

Oh Viet Nam, our martyred land! For twenty-five years our Lac Hong fellow countrymen have been shedding blood and tears and crying in anguish because of US aggression.

Last month, on the fifth anniversary of your death I returned to our native village after a long absence. The path leading to it was the same except that it was pockmarked by bomb craters and ploughed up by shell splinters; the houses had been demolished with only charred pillars left standing near the bullet-riddled cocotrees; in front of the creeper-entangled gate were patches of land overgrown with weeds.

I paid a visit to father's grave. He died six years ago, as you perhaps still remember. That year fifteen bombs were dropped on our hamlet, killing many people, including our beloved father. Near his grave were those of grandfather and grandmother covered with tiger grass as high as a man's head, and nearby was your grave; if it were not for a stone slab bearing your name and the inscription: "Died from wounds on February 25, 1966," I would not have found your last home. The American aggressors who style themselves allies of Viet Nam and champions of freedom have robbed me of you, who knew only to toil and moil all the year round on your patch of land to bring up your little sister.

Farther was our dear hamlet. The tiny stream was still meandering there; I used to knew the nooks and corners of that country in Central Nam Bo. Now to see it with its broken bridges and the house foundation overrun with grass, I felt quite a stranger: the land of my birth seemed to me a wild forest.

Were you still alive on that desolate but heroic land, you would have taken part in what our people have been doing, a battle to oust the Yankees and topple the quislings for the country to be independent, and our village to live in peace and happiness.

Peace was fleeting in father's and your generation. Now I am living in an era of fire and sword and fighting for the kind of genuine peace father and you had spoken to me about when I was only a child.

I pledge myself to be the girl you wanted to be so as to deserve to be a daughter of Viet Nam.

HUONG LAN

from a Saigonese school girl's diary

As Tet Festival Is Nearing in South Viet Nam Cities

AFTER the "Autumn economic revolution" initiated by the Thieu government, the big bosses and rich men can merrily welcome in *Nham Ty* Spring admist luxury good sold at competitive prices while the poor are complaining of the skyrocketing costs of prime necessities, this remark on the plight of South Viet Nam's townsfolk at the approach of Tet, comes from a Saigon paper, dealing with effect of Thieu's recent economic measures.

A rat's life for the Year of the Rat

Commodity prices up by 300-400 per cent, scores of social scourges such as prostitution and hooliganism, to which must be added deportation of population, forcible removals of houses and markets, murders and robbery..., that is the dark picture of the day-to-day life of the people living in the areas still under US-Thieu control.

Hawkers and petty merchants can hardly afford the daily rice: for two or three years their children have not eaten either meat or fish; civil servant and employees of private firms are too poor to buy *Tet* clothes for their children, they themselves may have to go to work in a loin-cloth; as for the teachers, they have at all times an empty stomach and yet must keep up appearances because of their pupils.

The Saigonese say in confidence among themselves: "In the year of the Pig one was always hungry like a pig; and in this year of the Rat life will certainly be like a rat's... so long as the Nguyen Van Thieu-type 'Republican' regime lasts."

Tet and the D.P.s

Tet is an opportunity for family reunions, in accordance with our national tradition.

This Tet, however, will find tens of thousands of people from Quang Tri and Thua Thien provinces living a wandering life in remote places far from their own villages as a result of the US-Thieu inhuman "population resettlement" plan. Likewise the poor civil servants and cadres of Bac Lieu province will have no roof to live under since the local quislings have evicted them from their own homes. Even the Bac Lieu market will be empty and desert as "provincial governor" Hoang Duc Ninh has ordered 10 coffee-houses at one time to close down, and more recently more than 500 fruit shops and sundries' shops to evacuate the bank of the Bac Lieu River where they used to operate. Right in Saigon, fruit shops at Le Tan Ke—Thap Muoi crossroad have been forcibly removed by the powerful pro-government Trade Unions.

Mugging rage

That is the caption of an article carried by a Saigon paper reporting cases of mugging and murder which are daily occurrences right in the main streets and toilers' quarters of South Vietnamese cities. Another paper reported that a big jeweler's shop in Hue City had been raided in broad daylight. At Qui Nhon, thugs threw tear gazes into crowded markets to sow panic and indulge in looting. In Saigon robbery is rife. Robbers do their trade openly, under the police's nose. Mention must also be made of cases of major robbery in which armed policemen or armymen take part and State trucks carry away the booty — all this in broad daylight and in defiance of the public. Each day at least 30 bicycles are stolen in Saigon, sometimes at the rate of 6 at a time. The anxiety of honest Saigonese finds expression in this comment by a Saigon paper *Trang Den* (Black and White): "As Tet approaches, in the wake of the economic revolution, robbery and plunder are escalating, and the common people live in a permanent fear of a visit of those 'heroes who live on looting'."

To welcome Spring in with a dose of poison

The following news item appreared in the Dec. 21, 1971 issue of *Tin Sang* (Morning News):

"At 7 a.m. on Feb. 18, a woman poisoned herself in her own house. It is understood that she was unable to bear her family's poverty at the approach of Tet. Her husband is an armyman (of the Saigon Army — *Ed.*) garrisoned away from home, her kids are numerous and still very young. Her salary was not enough to ensure their living with skyrocketing commodity prices. Out of despair, she sought death."

A quiet struggle

SINCE Mau Than Spring (1968) the South Vietnamese revolution has reached a new turning-point. The quisling administration has been in a quandary, its army in deliquescence. But most dangerous has been the growing popular indignation at the US-Saigon neo-colonialist regime. The people have further realized the strength and the just cause of the National Front for Liberation and at the same time the true nature of the aggressors and the traitors. In the past, many intellectuals, writers and artists could not make their choice, remained indifferent in face of the war, failed to make a difference between revolutionary war and aggressive war or stayed passive and dejected; now they have gradually grown alive to the realities of life in the cities under the impact of the generalized offensive of the liberation army in Mau Than spring.

Never has the national spirit powerfully and continually surged up among the Saigon cultural circles as in the recent years. It has been aroused by the patriotic and healthy cultural effervescence long since in the enemy-occupied cities of Saigon, Hue..., a "call back to the source," a "return to the nation," as it is described.

The aura of the heroic native land with a splendid record of resistance against foreign aggression will always shine. This rich and beautiful country with the vast Nam Bo fields and the huge High Plateaux forests has been ridden roughshod over by the US expeditionary corps and crisscrossed with barbed wire. "The native land has been raped," they think with boundless yearning, they now set about looking for it amidst devastations so as to "live by our sweat and tears, by our honest hands" (Kim Tuan in *Van*, January 15, 1971). Despite the tempests of fire, the rain of bombs and the stream of blood around them, they "continue to hear rivers quietly flow and see rice magnificently blossom" (Le Nhuoc Thuy in *Doi Zien*, December 30, 1971).

Out of love for their native land they feel a wrench in their hearts at the sight of the martyred cities in the American grip. In the past one only threw innuendoes about the Yanks, now they are openly censured by the Saigon press. "US dollars, goods and civilization dredges have torn South Viet Nam society to pieces and let it drift on the swift current of the war" (Ly Chanh Trung in *Dien Tin*, July 25, 1971). This society has generated depraved youths "with no other ideal than drugs, gang rape, sexy alien music, bushy hair and hippies garment." The press goes all out to lash at the Yankees. Even the South Viet Nam intellectuals living in the United States like Doctor Hai Au Vinh send articles home to denounce the dollar which "saps man's humanism and ethics." After US troops have been massively commited to South Viet Nam under the pretext of "defending its freedom against communism", "the sweetest woman in my hamlet leaves her husband and children at the call of the dollar" (*Dien Tin*, August 1971).

So many youths and people in South Viet Nam have fallen victims to the dollar, to a rotten political regime. The US aggressors are bent on using dollars and a corrupt culture to ruin a society, undermine the national feeling and the patriotism of a people. With regard to South Viet Nam in the throes of a revolution, this policy is all the more strictly enforced. Only by enticing people into debauchery can they easily draft mercenaries and hurl them into massacres.

To spearhead action against the US aggressors is also to flay their lackeys who wave the anti-Communist banner. Everybody knows that these henchmen are "prompted not by any ideal of freedom or democracy, but mainly by personal interests and avidity" (Nguyen Trong Van in *Doi Zien*, August 26, 1971). Their pleas for the "state" and the "nation" are just empty and deceptive words.

I have had enough of sweet drinks
I am fed up with treacherous meals,
With democracy, freedom, justice, humanism
From the lips of merchants.

(Dam San)

No wonder that the youths in the enemy-occupied cities are revolted by the bitter facts, and "the ensuing widening gap between them and their rulers" (Nguyen Trung in *Cong Luan*, December 4, 1971). They "want to smash to smithereens all those obstacles." They "long for a revolution by the entire people" to prevent the recurrence of such ironies:

We beg for freedom and are given prison terms
We beg for a decent life and get hunger and misery
We beg for love and receive hatred.

(Dam San)

As a matter of fact, over the recent years the youths in the South Viet Nam cities, particularly in Saigon, have repeatedly taken to the streets against draft, school militarization, Nguyen Van Thieu's one-man election farce... Reflecting this struggle and voicing their hatred for the US aggressors and their stooges, the patriotic and progressive cultural workers in Saigon deeply realize that each man's destiny cannot be dissociated from that of the nation. They know that "the present regime (US-Thieu) does not tolerate any progress and patriotism, but its unjust laws and traitorous policies have roused them into struggle right from within this regime" (Nguyen Trong Van in *Doi Zien*, August 26, 1971).

While militating for their right to live and the interests of their country, they have at heart national culture and rail at an enslaving literature and arts born of the decadent doctrines of the West. "If we are after existentialism and structuralism, products of illusion and distortion, how can we meet any requirement, clear any hurdle and stir any feeling of ours?" (Nguyen Hien Le in *Bach Khoa*, April 15, 1968). "A genuine culture always promotes the traditional national culture and assimilates the best of foreign cultures. But a foreign culture, however fine it may be, has to stop at the threshold of the past psychology, spirit and peculiarities of the nation which pervade her people's soul and mood" (Pham Zu in *Appeal to the source*, June 1, 1971). In other words, one has to be receptive to foreign cultural achievements according to the aesthetic concepts of one's own nation. If one assimilates them without discrimination, one's literature and arts will become alienated, hybrid and frail—no matter how abundant its production.

Such has been the persistent struggle waged by the urban intelligentsia in the enemy-occupied zone over the past years. It was not until after the 1968 offensives of the liberation troops against Saigon that the impact of the advocates of national culture was deeply felt on the cultural workers.

Remarkably, the anti-Communist and existentialist tendencies no longer rule the roost. Many writers have broken away from the "subservient literature and arts" or "literature and arts inspired by the woman's body" to return to the national literature and arts. The great and rich realism of the revolution in South Viet Nam has made them change their minds. The reality about the US-Saigon and the society in the enemy-controlled zone has accelerated this change. There has been a boom of literary and artistic creations in the recent years. Progressive writers have publicly spoken about the reluctant fight of the draftees and the sad fate of the mercenary army. They have come out against the US-Thieu fiendish thugs and praised the fight for national salvation of the South Viet Nam National Front for Liberation (Huynh Ngoc Son's *The offspring of the reptile* and Vo Truong Chinh's *He turns to the tram forests* in *Doi Zien*, November 1971...)

All these defenders of the national culture have brought alterations to the coarse materialist fabric of life in the US-Saigon-controlled cities of South Viet Nam. Its echo has been resounding far and wide and the ranks of its champions have been growing into a powerful force.

MAI NGUYEN

United action in Saigon: US, Australian, New Zealand and Saigon students urging US troop withdrawal from South Viet Nam

IN THE SAIGON PRESS

THIEU'S "PRESIDENTIAL GIFT"

Thieu's first gift after his return to office for a second term was a 45 % devaluation of the South Vietnamese currency. Commenting on this, a Saigon paper wrote: "Mr Thieu raked up everything from the toilers' pockets."

Along with the devaluation of the piastre, prices of all commodities continue to rise, especially as Tet is coming.

Here are some figures:

	1967	1971
Rice (1st quality)	100kg from 3,500 to 3,900*p*	from 8,000 to 9,000*p*
Rice (second quality)	100kg — 2,500 — 2,700*p*	— 6,050 — 7,000*p*
Pork	1 kg — 280 — 300*p*	— 600 — 650*p*
Beef (steak)	1 kg — 220 — 230*p*	— 500 — 600*p*
Fish	1 kg — 230 — 250*p*	— 500 — 550*p*
Shrimp	1 kg — 200 — 220*p*	— 400 — 600*p*
Chicken	1 kg — 280 — 300*p*	— 500 — 650*p*
Sugar	1 kg — 30 — 31*p*	— 100 — 150*p*
Gold	1 ounce — 8,500 — 9,000*p*	— 20,800 — 20,900*p*

(*p*: piastre)

Thus in four years the cost of rice has increased by 100%, that of sugar by more than 200%, that of gold by more than 100%. Generally speaking, market prices went up from 100 to 200%. How can a civil servant of category 4, class A, grade 5, with wife and two children live on a monthly pay of 11,600 piastres which had not been raised since 1967? It's ironical indeed that the administration has this banner hung up everywhere in the streets: "The people receive what they've contributed" (*Duoc Nha Nam*, Oct. 17, 1971). It's simply an impudent challenge.

"FREEDOM OF THE PRESS"

—Seizure of newspapers has become daily occurrence. Wrote *Tin Sang* on Oct. 23, 1971: "Every day, late in the afternoon police trucks — monumental ones — are parked round the corners of Pham Ngu Lao, De Tham, Nguyen Thai Hoc and Tran Hung Dao streets where newspapers are distributed.

Earlier, the authorities send policemen to guard newspaper offices from 2.00 p.m. Sometimes police cars stand by there not to see to their security but to take away their issues.

Suffice it to go by a distribution centre to realize that not a day passes without policemen piling up newspapers into their cars to carry them off to their stations for the guardians of the police state — rather than readers — to read.

More intolerable than cholera and plague, is this prolonged rash of newspaper confiscations.

It's terrible indeed!

It will come to an end when only pro-government papers like *Tien Bo* and *Tin Sang* are left. Independent and opposition papers are doomed to close down... That is the freedom of the press in this country."

11th merging anniversary of the South Viet Nam PLAF (Feb. 15, 1961—Feb. 15, 1972)

STEELED BY ELEVEN GLORIOUS YEARS

THE uncommon trials imposed by a fight against the most atrocious war of aggression in history have contributed in no small way to temper the South Viet Nam PLAF, redouble their strength and enrich them with invaluable, multi-faceted experience. With the people's help, the PLAF have succeeded in defeating step by step a huge army of aggression. In eleven excruciating and glorious years, they displayed their boundless devotion to the nation's cause, supreme heroism and unshakable resolve to fight and to win.

The PLAF are the very embodiment of an iron will, high combativeness and perseverence in action, and an offensive strategy suitable to South Viet Nam's revolutionary war.

In this life-and-death contest between the South Vietnamese people on one side, and the US aggressors and their hirelings of all stripes on the other, the South Vietnamese people's and armed forces fighting will has carried the day over the enemy's aggressive designs. This will has, as its foundation, a thorough political awakeness and a full realization of the basic immediate objectives of the struggle in South Viet Nam, namely *independence, democracy, peace, neutrality, prosperity and ultimate national reunification.* It is permeated with this axiom: *"Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom"* and has inherited the multi-millenary tradition of nation-building and national defence of the Vietnamese. It is an amalgam of fervent patriotism, bitter hatred of the enemy and genuine internationalism.

The US imperialists and their valets wanted to use counter-revolutionary armed violence to turn South Viet Nam into a new-type colony and military base of the United States. They resorted to the most savage methods against South Vietnamese patriots, and drown in blood all revolutionary and progressive forces. They noisily prepared a "march to the North" with a view to conquering the whole of Viet Nam. A unilateral, one-way war of utmost atrocity was unleashed by them in mid-1959.

The South Vietnamese had no other choice than to rise up in a wave of "concerted uprisings" at the end of 1959. Without an ounce of steel in their hands, with only undauntedness in their minds, they valiantly resisted the huge coercive apparatus of the enemy and were determined to preserve the fruits gained by the revolution ever since the anti-French resistance war (1945-1954). The various people's liberation armed forces were born from that determination and grew up with it.

Their slogans were *"Fight with whatever weapon you have in hand", "wipe out the enemy with his own captured arm", "Rudimentary and up-to-date weapons go hand in hand", "Defeat the enemy with revolutionary courage and resourcefulness."* They perseveringly and heroically backed the civilians' political actions while concurrently mounting offensive on the enemy.

Their first engagement took place at Tua Hai, Eastern Nam Bo, at the beginning of 1960. With small forces representing only the 1/20th of the enemy's, they fought most valiantly, using both military and political actions and wreaked 500 adverse casualties, captured 1,000 guns, and tons of ammunition and war materials. The ensuing battles were also characterized by the same inequality of strength and it was only the fighting will that could explain the successes of the people's liberation armed forces.

The Ap Bac victory (Jan. 2, 1963) heralded the defeat of the neo-colonialist war waged by the US imperialists at the hands of the guerillas. From Binh Gia (May 31, 1965), the US special war was totally frustrated.

Towards the end of 1965 the US imperialists committed *en masse* their troops to South Viet Nam. They hoped that this half-a-million-man expeditionary corps armed with all kinds of modern, short of nuclear, weapons would help crush the will of the South Vietnamese and wipe out all their liberation armed forces. But US material strength was powerless in face of the PLAF's determination which instead never ceased stiffening. To save the country, the PLAF achieved new, resounding feats at Van Tuong, Nui Thanh, Pleymer, Bau Bang, Tay Ninh, etc. Their fighting spirit was further illustrated by the general offensives and concerted uprisings in early spring 1968.

Ready for attack

The "limited war" strategy of the US imperialists thus came to grief. Compelled to withdraw their troops, they were nevertheless stubborn enough to prolong the war with a new strategy — "Vietnamization." The fighting was expanded to the whole of Indochina, counter-attacks were frenziedly mounted against the three Indochinese countries. The South Viet Nam PLAF, joining hands with the revolutionary armed forces of brother Cambodia and Laos, were resolved to keep up their common resistance against US imperialism.

Indeed new pages have been added by them to the glorious history of the Vietnamese people. It is safe to say that the decisive factors of their victories are: the revolutionary spirit of incessant offensive animating each officer and man, their determination to fight and to win, their readiness to surmount all obstacles and endure all hardships. These factors are prevalent everywhere, either in guerilla-type engagements or in regular battles with the participation of different arms and services, either among main force units on the move, or among troops besieging the enemy or holding their ground, either on the forefront or along the liaison or transportation line, or in the rear.

The same singleness of purpose helped the PLAF and South Vietnamese people develop without let-up the offensive, from small engagements to bigger battles till the US-Saigon "special war" was totally foiled. It is again this singleness of purpose which helped them keep up the offensive on all the three kinds strategic areas — the highlands, plains and cities — when US troops massively entered South Viet Nam and started their "limited war." In the years 1965-66, then 1966-67, two ambitious, large-scale, strategic counter-offensives of the enemy were completely routed. The early spring 1968 general offensives and concerted uprisings were typical of the offensive spirit and inventiveness of the Vietnamese people in the conduct of their people's war. The PLAF have ever since been bringing to full play their strong points to frustrate step by step Abrams' defensive "clear-and-hold" strategy, his "pacification" programmes and Nixon's "Vietnamization" plan.

Determined to continue their offensive and firmly holding the strategic initiative, the PLAF have been continually applying new, highly efficient methods of combat.

The people's war has its own directives, principles and military art which are firmly grasped by the three kinds of troops of the PLAF. New methods of combat have consequently been applied to better wipe out the enemy.

As a matter of fact, at the beginning there were only groups of full-time or half-time guerillas, armed propagandists and self-defence guards. They later on grew into a full-fledged army with its three kinds of troops possessed of a high level of combat efficiency. Giant strides have been made in this respect: in 1963 the Liberation Army at each engagement could knock out only enemy forces of company size. In 1964, it could put out of action entire battalions, and in early 1965 it could write off or heavily decimate whole regiments. US troops arm-

ed to the teeth were also exposed to crushing blows by the PLAF which in mid-1965 could eliminate only one US company at a time, but in late 1965 and more especially in Winter-Spring 1966-67 could destroy entire US battalions in each engagement, and entire US brigades or divisions in each campaign. In recent years, as the "Vietnamized" war has taken on new proportion, it has not been rare to see whole enemy regiments and brigades wiped out by the PLAF in the course of operations. Destruction of enemy manpower goes hand in hand with preservation of one's own strength — that is also an indication of improved combat efficiency of the PLAF.

What explains this is first and foremost the capability of giving full play to a revolutionary army's absolute supremacy — the political and moral factor. It is also due to a full use of our own fortes, thus compelling the enemy to fight battles of our own choice, and consequently preventing them from taking advantage of their strong points in troop strength, fire-power and mobility. Methods of fighting small, medium and big battles are closely combined, as are guerilla tactics and big unit warfare. Sometimes, we gather our own troops in compact units to achieve numerical superiority but sometimes we use smaller contingents to a big enemy force. With our versatile methods, we always keep the initiative of action and the enemy are driven into utter passiveness, having to face our attacks everywhere, and can hardly avoid annihilation. They are thinned out by the PLAF which "hang on to their belts and hit them," give them no respite by attacking them either in their strongholds or during their marches. In all circumstances, they are outwitted by a resourceful adversary who is always on the offensive, baffles all their combat methods and tactics, takes them to new battlefields in order to wipe out more of their forces. If in 1963 the PLAF put out of action more than 94,000 enemy troops and captured 10,000 weapons of all kinds (3 times more than in 1961), in 1969 when enemy forces reached an all-time high, they put out of action 645,000 enemy troops including 235,000 GIs. Initial statistics show that from early 1961 to June 1971, the South Vietnamese people and armed forces put out of action 2,951,000 enemy troops, downed or destroyed on the ground 27,500 aircraft, destroyed 32,300 tanks and armoured vehicles, sank and burnt 4,765 boats and vessels.

THE PLAF AND WESTERN OPINION

We have to confront with the most talented guerillas ever in human history.

R. Russel, Chairman of the US Senate Armed Service Committee

Vietnamese guerillas are masters in traps, and with boundless cleverness, they can turn everything into horrible lethal weapons.

Baltimore Sun

The liberation forces are skilful, well-trained and daring fighters. The allied troops are facing a staunch and well-organized enemy provided with a rudimentary but amazingly effective supply system.

General Westmoreland

They have shown to the Vietnamses people that they can fight wherever and whenever they like, and have made the Saigon government and its army a laughing stock.

Le Figaro

Successful attacks (of the PLAF) have turned Westmoreland into a defeated general, Johnson into an unsaddled cowboy and the dollar into a devaluated currency. Vietcong guerillas are mythological personalities. They are a frightful and respected adversary.

UPI

How to win a decisive victory over the elusive army which come from the people, operate in their familiar jungles and use perfectly the art and experience of guerilla warfare they have been waging for a quarter of a century ?

New York Times

The SVN guerillas are the greatest and most talented fighters whom one has to fear and respect.

US News and World Report

Building the army while fighting, more and more victories won, a steady growth through combat

Eleven years have elapsed since the merging of the people's liberation armed forces — eleven years of grim fighting and glorious successes. Born in the midst of the national liberation movement of the South Vietnamese people at its high tide, our PLAF have been growing from anti-terror self-defence units into a heroic and invincible army, capable of victorious actions against the enemy in any kind of terrain — highlands, plains or cities. The main force units with their different well-trained arms have been acting as a punch and their big-scale battles have contributed to bring about notable changes in the war situation. The guerillas and regional forces have been setting an immense net against the enemy. While fighting, the PLAF have been bending their efforts on building their own strength. They have never ceased developing, and after each battle, each campaign, each round of actions they made a new step forward. To fight daring but certainly successful battles, to fight continually and at times achieve great results, to complete our armament and equipment with war booty, to give due attention to the management of troops and weapons — that is how the PLAF have been carrying out their long-drawn effort, growing up through the fighting, and bringing about a change in the balance of forces between the enemy and us. Partial successes are to be won if final victory is to be our ultimate objective. Training and building, summing up experience at different stages — experience in fighting, in logistics, in the way of increasing troop strength and equipment so as to meet the requirements of war — all that has been actively done by the PLAF, in particular between two battles or two military campaigns.

As an army born of the people and fighting for the people's cause, the South Vietnamese Liberation Army in all circumstances enjoy the people's protection, assistance and help. On the other hand, it is a principle in building our revolutionary armed forces not to dissociate the building

of military forces and the building and expanding of political forces of the masses. The PLAF know how to rely upon the political forces of the masses to build and develop their own strength.

The US aggressors have sought every means to destroy and weaken our revolutionary armed forces. But contrary to their expectations, they have been greatly alarmed by the unbelievable growth of the PLAF.

The continual growth and increasing successes of the PLAF are accounted for by their being a genuine army of the people fighting for a lofty ideal : national liberation and defence of the Fatherland. They are embodiment of the finest virtues of the Vietnamese people, heir to the traditions of undauntedness of the heroic Vietnamese nation, and beneficiary of experience gathered through many decades of opposition to old-type and new-type colonialism in South Viet Nam. The members of the PLAF are the best sons of the South Vietnamese people, and of the Vietnamese nation, and their pride.

Glory to the PLAF !

THANH HONG

On Highway 9 · The PLAF attack

STRONGER THAN STEEL

Company "Steel" of Hiron battalion, hero unit of the SVN PLAF

THE South Viet Nam Liberation fighter is eleven years old. In the past 11 years, with his seven-league legs, he has travelled the length and breadth of the country, braving enemy bombs and shells, surmounting all obstacles and achieving glowing feats of arms.

Relying on their vast supply of military hardware, the US imperialists think they can bully people into submission. When this colossal gendarme brandishes his iron stick not all people in this world are free from fear. His H-bombs, his 15,000 pounders, his giant air and naval forces and his mountains of tanks, guns, bombs and shells, with all these, he shakes his iron fist at white-livered people. Unflinching before brutal force, the South Viet Nam Liberation fighter has made short work of American steel and keeps advancing by leaps and bounds towards his ultimate goal. It is traditional in Viet Nam to wish one "hard feet and soft rock." A young fighter of a LAF regular unit just cited as "Hero Unit", while extending his New Year greetings to a young co-villager who was about to join the Liberation army, said, "May your feet grow harder to make American steel soft!" Such words in a hot battlefield are those of the new era in which the US imperialist Goliath is biting the dust at the hands of the Vietnamese David.

OVER the past 11 years, a grim confrontation has taken place in South Viet Nam between the bare-footed Liberation fighter and American steel, between the growing strength of the PLAF and the massive power of the US imperialist aggressor who lacks wits but has steel galore. Under the tough feet of the Liberation fighter, American steel has failed to produce the expected effect: to bring the South Vietnamese people to their knees. Savage tortures, horrors and brutalities can in no way silence this warcry of the South Vietnamese people: "rather death than servitude." Ben Tre, the home province of Mme Nguyen Thi Dinh, deputy Commander of the South Viet Nam PLAF, was aflame with a mass uprising. People removed barbed wire fences, destroyed "New Life" hamlets, attacked enemy posts, armed themselves with captured enemy weapons and staged concerted uprisings in the rural areas across South Viet Nam. Pham Van Hai, a veteran of the first resistance war, armed with a knife, assaulted Trung An post and seized its armoury to equip the first PLAF platoon of the Saigon-Gia Dinh sector. Other units of the PLAF came into being in similar conditions. Because they are determined not to be enslaved, the linen-capped, bare-footed Liberation fighters, fed and protected by the people, have overcome all hardships, grown fast like the wonder boy of Zong village in a Vietnamese legend, fought valiantly and successfully.

Armed at first with rudimentary weapons, the PLAF soon knocked out the puppet army at Ap Bac, Binh Gia and Dong Xoai, and completely foiled the US "special war." Faced with the danger of total collapse, in 1965, American troops, armed to the teeth, landed en masse in South Viet Nam, which caused concern to the whole of progressive mankind. Confident of their own strength and with the nation's glorious tradition of fighting foreign aggression behind them, the Liberation fighters however kept up their offensive posture.

At Van Tuong on the central coast, in a major landing operation they mounted to destroy a small Liberation Army unit, the American troops had their first encounter with the Liberation fighters and lost over one thousand men. In the Nui Thanh battle, for the first time the Liberation fighters wiped out all men of a well-entrenched American company. In a rubber plantation area in Eastern Nam Bo, after hearing intelligence reports on a heavy American troops concentration supported by gun-bristling tanks, the Commander of a Liberation army unit asked his men, "Shall we go into action even without any anti-tank guns?" "Yes" was the unanimous answer. Without the enemy knowing it, the Liberation fighting men closed in. Then all at once, they charged and using small arms and hand grenades, they wiped out the steel monsters one after another. The 90-minute battle ended with American dead littering the ground and red flames rising from the American tanks. When B.52's were called in, the attacking forces had already vanished. The strato-fortress simply poured down tons of bombs upon the surviving American GI's who were running for cover in the jungle. US steel melted in the confrontation with the Liberation army. The feet of the Liberation fighter outmanoeuvred and outran the US giant bombers. He had discovered the basic weakness of the aggressors behind their apparent toughness, and could easily notice the panic that struck the latter when they had lost their steel armour. He had clearly seen the impasse and the strategic passivity of the aggressors forced to fight battles of their adversary's choice and on his own terms. He was well aware that the Americans landed in force into South Viet Nam from a losing position.

WITH direct American military involvement, the fiercer the war grew, the more splendid revolutionary heroism became. In Eastern Nam Bo, a heroic Liberation army unit, in hot pursuit, captured enemy tanks and used their guns to bring down US jets. In the Northernmost sector, a whole US armoured regiment was crushed. In the streets of Saigon, a home guard with only 3 days of combat experience on his record fought 3 successive engagements and was responsible for 9 enemy tanks wrecked with 13 rounds of anti-tanks shells. With home-made mines, a grandpa guerilla of Quang Nam province knocked out 4 M.113's in a single action. There was a rush for enemy tanks. Even a 13-year-old girl could trap them. By thousands, US tanks ringed fortified points around Saigon, Da Nang, Cam Ranh... but could not prevent the Liberation break-through. With their increasingly high combat skill and their fearless feet, the Liberation fighters turned American tanks into steel caskets.

In the Mekong Delta and in the sandy plain of the central coast, tens of thousands of US war vessels and combat launches have been sunk along with the US "river assault" tactics. Within 3 years since the Tet offensive of 1968, the Liberation fighters sank or destroyed 300 US-Saigon military vessels on a 10-km portion of Cua Viet river. US steel and enemy corpses blocked traffic on Ham Luong, Cua Viet, Saigon and Vam Co rivers and various canals in the Mekong Delta. Disasters also occurred at floating bases on Ham Luong, So Thuong and other rivers and at the military ports of Da Nang, Qui Nhon, Cam Ranh and Saigon. No amount of steel can shake the determination of the Liberation fighters to liberate their country. The war maniacs in the White House and the Pentagon who often brag about the inconceivable American air power, now complain of the impotence of this ideal asset of theirs on the South Viet Nam battlefield. Two guerilla teams of village P., Ninh Thuan province, consisting of 8 men with 8 rifles in their hands, battled with American war planes for 2 years running and, in 112 actions, downed 34 of them. A section leader of the regional armed forces in the Western Highlands, armed with a carbine, hacked his way through the jungle at the head of an aircraft-hunting team, and cut down a dozen or more US helicopters, forcing the enemy to call off an operation. Different kinds of American war planes have fallen to deadly ground fire. Liberation anti-aircraft gunners have grassed many Phantoms, Thunderchiefs and other workhorses of the US air force. They have frustrated the US heli-borne and leap-frog tactics, and debunked US air superiority. They have pranged American planes in the air and on the ground. Bien Hoa or Tan Son Nhut air bases are not invulnerable. The Liberation fighters will wriggle through 20 rows of barbed wire, pass the electronic eyes, cross lines of armoured cars on a round-the-clock patrol, get into the centre of the airfield, mount the planes and blast them by the hundred at one stroke, wipe out US pilots and technicians also by the hundred and then make their way out while flames leap high into the air and explosions rock the whole area.

The legendary feet of the Liberation fighter have struck fear into the heart of the enemy and brought enthusiasm and pride to friends everywhere. They make no areas safe for the enemy. They are more mobile than super-sonic jets. Year in year out, they are on the move to do the fighting, untiringly. They are more numerous than the stars in the sky. No one can tell exactly how many guerilla fighters there are. Men and women, old and young, such fighters can be seen everywhere, in jungled mountains, in the marshlands or on sandy beaches; they put the Yanks under tight

encirclement, lay ambushes, snipe at the enemy, plant mines and spikes, set booby traps, blast down bridges, cut off routes and do everything to catch the enemy in a maze of harassing warfare, from Quang Tri up North to Southernmost Ca Mau. It is the guerilla fighters that have brought war deep into the enemy's hide-outs. Over a half of the total enemy casualty toll goes to their credit.

TWO US dry-season strategic counter-offensives were defeated.

War was fought in the streets of South Viet Nam cities and towns in the 1968 Tet offensive which rocked the White House and shook all the 5 continents.

Their local war strategy thwarted, the US imperialists have switched over to the "Vietnamization" strategy to "change the colour of the corpses" in pursuance of their aggressive design. They have been prolonging and widening the war, hoping to secure a military decision with the blood of the Saigon troops and US steel. The Liberation fighters of South Viet Nam, Cambodia and Laos have joined efforts and achieved news-making successes in all I dochina battlefields. US steel has failed to protect various client armies. Saigon troops were beaten hollow in Operation "Lam Son 719" and "Toan Thang 1/71;" Phnom Penh soldiery cried for help in Operations "Tchenla 1" and "Tchenla 2;" Vientiane troops, Vang Pao's special forces and Thai mercenaries took seri us thrashings in the Plain of Jars, Saravane, Boloven, Sam Thong and Long Cheng. The US-provided steel shield of these satellite armies has been blasted to smithereens in Southern and Northern Laos, in Northeastern and North Western Cambodia and across South Viet Nam.

The US aggressors are writhing in agony. They stop at nothing to block the advance of the Liberation Army. Over the past 11 years, they have dumped nearly 7 million tons of bombs and more than 9,000 tons of t xic chemicals on the tiny land of South Viet Nam, seemingly to burn bare the whole Long Range an l exterminate every living thing on earth. However, the fiercest air war in the history of modern warfare, with the massive use of 15,000 - pound BLU — 82/B bombs which were never used in World War II, has been able to cow the Liberation fighters.

The US aggressors who rely on steel will meet their doom in steel. No brutal force can stand up to the people's war. No latent power is greater than that of the Liberation Army.

The steel chain of the international gendarme has been broken in this part of the world. Stronger than steel, the Liberat on Army will continue its march. Even if it takes many more years and many more generations to do the job, the Liberation fighters are resolved to carry the All - Victorious Banner of the late President Ho Chi Minh to final triumph.

PHONG VU

PEOPLE AND COMBATANTS

A little actor

I had lost my way to my unit. Although I had disguised myself as a man of the city, I had to be constantly on the look-out...

Toward noon, as I was walking in a crowded street, I looked in all directions, then intended to make a turn round the corner. But I don't know why, I hesitated — and proceeded straight on. All of a sudden, a kid emerged from a house, embraced me and cried out: "Oh Papa! Papa is back! Mama, look, papa is back!"

An old lady and a woman in her thirties came out to meet me, visibly moved and happy. The child pulled me into his house and said to me fondly: "Papa, don't you bring me some Tet gift?" The woman also asked me: "You wrote you would be back on the 18th, didn't you? You don't realize how anxiously everyone in the family has been waiting for you!"

As this was said to me, the child whispered into my ears: "Uncle! please take refuge in our home, the police is mounting guard over there!"

Only then did I understand why those people unknown to me had given me so warm a welcome. All passers-by in the street thought this was a real family reunion: wasn't I a man returning home for the Têt, from a far-away locality where I was supposed to work?

Once I was inside the house, the kid told me with a knowing smile: "I have been shadowing you closely since morning and I know who you are!"

As to the old lady, she cautiously looked out into the street, then, closing the door, said to me in a low voice: "Stay here for some time with us. There are some policemen at the street's end. If they come here and inquire who you are, tell them you are my son-in-law on Têt leave."

So all members of this family had been staging a performance just to save me from the enemy grip. I spent two days and two nights with them under the care and protection from the old lady and the young woman. As for the boy, he displayed great zeal and resourcefulness in helping me make contact with my unit.

When I had to leave, the old lady prepared for me a basketful of provisions and the child burst into tears. I tried a joke to conceal my emotion: "You put up a good act, nephew! When Saigon is liberated, I'm sure you'll become an actor!"

The child could not help laughing, with tears still in his eyes.

NGUYEN VAN KHAI
(Dong Xoai Unit)

Hero Le Ma Luong

Fish and Water

THERE were some hitches in our attack on Tan Son Nhut airfield, details which we had overlooked — and the fighting grew tougher and dragged out.

At daybreak, our unit was ordered to withdraw immediately to preserve our strength. As I was darting out of the airfield's fence, an enemy bullet splinter hit me, and I fell down. When I came to, I could not stand on my feet since the bone of my left thigh had been broken. I clenched my teeth and crawled into a thick bush.

It was now broad daylight. Through the foliage, I saw an elderly man, with white hair and beard, but still hale and healthy. He inspected the grass then went straight into my hideout. I could not bring myself to think he might not be one of ours because his face looked so gentle and kind. However, I did not relax my vigilance. As he pushed aside the leaves and saw me, he startled. He glanced around him his forehead furrowed in deep thought. Seeing me remain motionless, gun in hand, he said: "I know who you are."

"Let me hide your gun first," he said, "then I'll try to take you to my home. It's not safe here."

"Should I hide my gun?" I asked myself. "What if I bumped against one of them?" "Wouldn't it be better to remain here, wait till the enemy comes and fight him to a finish?"

"I've sworn not to part with my gun so long as I live." I told the old man in a resolute voice. After staring at me a moment, he said: "All right. I'll come back in a few minutes!"

He went away shuffling his feet to remove all traces of blood. This was quite an indication of his "reliability." Still I kept on my guard and did not leave my hideout. When the sun rose high in the sky, the old man returned, carrying on his back a big bundle of straw that almost concealed him from head to foot. As he could not see me, he said: "I am a good man, not a traitor. Don't be afraid. Come out and I'll take you home on my back."

I was thus carried on the old man's back, my body and my gun entirely wrapped in the bundle of straw. When we arrived at his place, he put me behind the straw stack in the court-yard and sadly told me that his son had been drafted into the Saigon army and it would be dangerous for me to stay inside his house. But my shelter could not be kept secret for long. When his son knew I was somewhere about the house, the old man moved me inside and showed me to him: "All right, I have been sheltering a PLAF man! It's up to you to decide: either you let me care for him until he recovers, or you go and report to the devils at the post and get a reward in return!"

But the old man did not know his son well enough: my month's stay was filled with his and his father's fond care. When I had completely recovered, it was this very youth in Saigon army uniform that guided me to the liberated areas.

DANG HUYEN
(Independent Company No 70, Saigon)

Poems by the South Viet Nam Liberation fighters

A message for mother

I want to send word to mother
That two ambushes in one night was fun.
When independence returns, you can rest assured
I'll come home to your great joy.

ANONYMOUS

The song of a flute

The song of a flute resounds all around
Mingled with the jungle's rustle and brook's babble
Cock-adoodle-doo chimes in unison
And round the clock warms the fighter's heart.

THE VINH

A hundred mountain ranges

On the vermillion dirt tracks
I've been battling the US foe three full years.
Three full years, my feet've been treading these tracks,
Ranging these mounts far and wide.
The nearer ones, our guns have rolled through,
The farther ones, our cannons, our feet have travelled over.
At midnight our batteries roar the jungle out of sleep,
A hundred mountain ranges awaken.
Yonder US barracks sizzle in a blaze,
Here jungle and mounts cheer and artillery rumbles.

HANH CAN

Uncle's verses

Who is reciting a poem of Uncle by the pass
In the jungle on the border in the evening glow on the Truong Son
The marching troops rock mount and hill,
The inspiring lines winging their steps.
The shadow of guns is woven into the blue sky,
The rhymes of verses are in tune with the "Long March" air.
Uncle's words breathe vigour into us
And speed us up hill and down dale toward the enemy.

NGOC KHUYEN

Hammocks hung high as heaven

The fairies of yore slept in silken hammocks
Nowadays I hang mine as high as heaven.
Out of boredom the fays tossed about,
Soundly I sleep in the lap of hills and trees.
The fairies' souls drifted with the clouds,
I dream of a ruse to envelop and wipe out the foe.

CONG HAM

All a fighter owns

A fighter's life is ever so pleasant!
All he owns can hardly fill half a knapsack:
For all clothing a uniform and fatigues,
A piece of chute, a nylon hammock,
An oil lamp dangling on his hip
From a plaited coloured cord,
(Which gives enough light for him to write to his love),
A soft hat for rain and shine,
A pair of rubber tyre sandals worn thin but still firm,
His inseparables through thick and thin.
Mere trifles, aren't they?
But most treasured
Is this submachine gun,
Which coupled with a lion's heart,
Makes him a millionaire.

DIEP MINH

Catching crabs in the forest

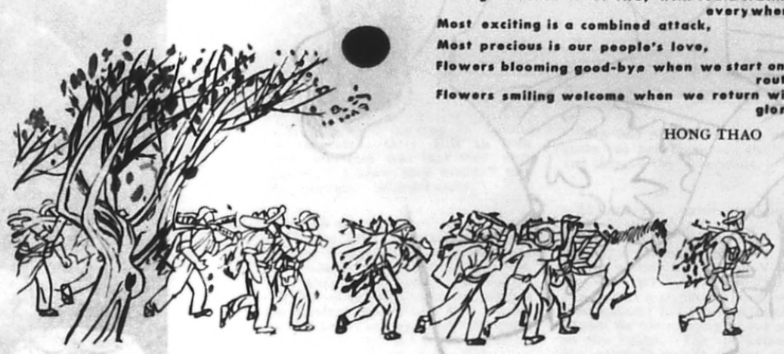
Turn the black stone and catch small crabs,
Turn the red stone and catch big crabs,
Go deep into the hole and capture all the mother crabs,
All of them, small, big, mothers, children,
Once in the hole, there's no escape,
Like the Yankees, under our generalized offensives.

ANONYMOUS

Digging trenches in the moon

The moon is like a lantern,
Emitting light for the Liberation fighters to dig trenches.
Though sweat soaks their clothes and wets their hands,
They pound away with increasing energy,
Their tongues wagging about raids to come.
Three men can comfortably sleep in their hammocks in one shelter,
While the moon peeps down through the foliage,
Flooding hammocks with liquid silver.
Oh moon! How old are you?
I'm only sixteen and already a combatant.

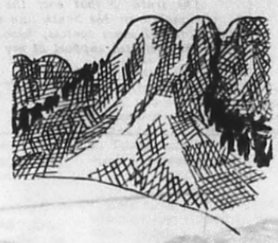
ANNOYMOUS



The cloud–riding dragon

On the mountain top, the Heavenly gate is wide open,
The rubber sandals tread on the cloud-wrapped peak,
The cloud-riding dragon legend of one's childhood is called back to mind,
And one feels like a dragon on a cloud's back.
Climb on the most dizzy height and look down,
The line of troops is wriggling up the slope like a dragon mounting on a cloud.

ANONYMOUS



Marching troops

Nicest is the glow of youth,
Merriest is a send-off for front-bound lads,
Most boisterous is the rush of a post
Through a dense net of fire, with feats cracking everywhere,
Most exciting is a combined attack,
Most precious is our people's love,
Flowers blooming good-bye when we start on a route,
Flowers smiling welcome when we return with glory.

HONG THAO

ed itorial

For an Everlasting Spring

TET in Viet Nam is synonymous with superlative beauty. It heralds spring of the lunar calendar, the finest of the fine seasons on this S-shaped land.

In spring in Viet Nam the sky is a translucid blue, the air bracingly cool, all animal and vegetal kinds develop and procreate.

In spring trees bloom and buds shoot up. Since time immemorial, our nation has chosen it as the time to begin sowing and planting. Each year after a nation-wide tree-growing spring, a brain child of Uncle Ho, one half of our land becomes many shades greener.

In Viet Nam tropical beasts and birds proliferate at a rapid rate in spring. The spring sky of the country looks more magnificent with swift swallows soaring up to dizzy heights, while everywhere in the jungles and in the fields a vast symphony sings a paen to life.

IN Viet Nam spring is beautiful because it is usually the season of national glory. This land of braves was founded 4,000 years ago in springtime. Since then, its history has recorded resplendent pages, mostly in spring.

In the first century A.D., a great fear seized the hearts of the aggressors of our land because of the insurrection led by the Trung Sisters in all its 65 districts in the first days of the year 40.

Since then the tradition has been continued up to our days.

The historic Bach Dang River celebrated no less than four triumphal Tets in the 10th and 13th centuries after Ly Bi, Ngo Quyen, Le Hoan and Tran Hung Dao had repelled various aggressors in marvellous naval battles.

Ly Thuong Kiet in 1077, Le Loi in 1418 and Quang Trung in 1789 also spent Tet among their armies after beating to pulp the invaders. In the very year of the French bourgeois revolution, Quang Trung slammed Viet Nam's gate shut to the face of the Northern feudal forces.

A new era with new springs has been ushered in by our great national hero Ho Chi Minh. It was heralded by spring 1930 when he cemented the union of the Vietnamese patriots. And since the rebirth of the land, a vernal hue has adorned all seasons in Viet Nam.

In South Viet Nam, an inseparable part of our cherished Fatherland, spring is full of the mettle of the whole nation. Spring 1960 has gone down as the season of concerted uprisings in the van of which marched the Ben Tre people.

And then came Mau Than (1968) spring which put Viet Nam on the map, and enriched the White House and Pentagon terminology with a new word. An unrivalled spring in our national history, it has initiated a fresh phase in our resistance, a phase of successes which have been warming the cockles of the hearts of the American and world progressives. At Mau Than Tet, deluges of fire were poured on the heads of the US aggressors and their agents. The soft-hatted Liberation fighter who used to haunt jungles and mountains has since appeared in the very streets of Saigon, Hue, Da Nang, heated white by the fire of battle. The boy so dear to the people has brought the war into the enemy sanctuaries, foiled their predatory schemes of the limited war and thrown a strong light on the US losing position.

'Mau Than Tet has been the harbinger of other turbulent Tets. It was, like its successors, glowing with the heroic aura of Quang Trung and Ly Bi's Ten Thousand Spring Tradition. Thanks to you, Liberation fighters, thanks to you, combatants of the long-haired army, for having added lustre to our spring, to the millenary Tet of the nation.

OWING TO a propitious [illegible] the Liberation fighter will be exactly [illegible] traditional New Year's Day (February 15, 1972). A new batch of spring will invigorate his arms. All the best [illegible] for him to write more splendid chapters [illegible] the spring.

Liberation fighter, [illegible] is invisibly beautiful, Tet in Viet Nam is unbelievably [illegible] blooms vie with other blooms in cheering you [illegible] overhead waiting for your good tidings to carry them to our countrymen in North and South, to our friends in all the five continents.

Liberation fighter, spring belongs to you. Your exploits will give it a more dazzling brilliance.

Liberation fighter, let off your gun instead of the traditional crackers, wave your flag in lieu of the customary flowers, and ornament Viet Nam's spring with an everlasting beauty.

SOUTH VIET NAM IN STRUGGLE

The flower girl

HOA (flower) was twenty years old in June 1970. She was more beautiful than the flowers she sold at Ben Thanh Market. But people also liked her for her qualities. She was an only daughter. Her mother, Mme Sau, was a seamstress. Her father run over by a military truck in Le Van Duyet street died four years earlier. She started selling flowers at fifteen. Her mother was always anxious for her beauty attracted the attention of dancing hall keepers and theatrical troupe managers. But she turned down all their offer of job. In over a year in business, to her mother's surprise, she did

not spend any money on her food and clothing nor did she bring her mother any money, and every day she would come home at 8 or 9 in the evening, very merry and talkative.

Once, as an early curfew had been decreed in Saigon, her mother had a heart to talk with her. "I don't mind if you spend all that you earn. But don't hide from me what you're doing and give me worries, darling!"

"I'm not that kind of bad girls, mother." Hoa replied. "The money I earn, I invest it in a most profitable enterprise. But I can't tell you now. You'll know it later when Saigon is blown up."

"What are you talking about, dear? Who do you think you are, a military commander? What do you mean by 'When Saigon is blown up'?"

Hoa giggled and hugged her mother.

Mme Sau was a poor worker who apart from her own trade hardly knew anything. But she could not be kept in the dark for long about what was brewing. One day she said to friends: "I've been told that the liberation men fight very bravely and our people in the free zone have made a great contribution to the revolution. As Vietnamese we must do our bits, musn't we? I suggest we make linen hats for the liberation fighters when they come te liberate Saigon."

The idea was warmly welcomed and soon the stitching began.

Hoa went on with her trade at Ben Thanh Market. Often Yankees and Saigon policemen took her wares without paying to tease her. But she did not react at the thought that their days were numbered.

MAU THAN Spring (1968) came. Gun shots rang all over the city. The streets were full of NFL flags and swarming with people,

From Ben Thanh Market, Hoa rushed home to tell her mother of the momentous event. But the old woman was out.

Hoa then ran to the poor's quarters where her mother was working. She saw that people were thronging the streets, ready to go and greet the liberation troops. With much difficulty, she pushed her way through the crowd to the hat makers: "My name is Hoa," she said. "I've come to pick up thirty soft hats for my mates. Here is the receipt."

As the voice sounded very familiar one, the woman in charge — Mme Sau — raised her head and, what a surprise, saw her daughter: "Silly girl!" she admonished her. "Why did you hide the truth from me? Now take your hats first, you'll be punished for your 'naughtiness' at home later."

"Sorry, mother," Hoa said. "It was an order from higher level that we should keep strict secrecy."

Hoa was very happy as the money she had saved for over one year now brought returns: she had given it to the women in her mother's team to buy the material for the hats without her mother knowing it and she was pleased that it was her very mother who delivered the goods to her.

With the bundle of hats on her shonlder, Hoa visited all the nooks and corners of District X., distributing them to the liberation fighters. To those who asked her name and where the hats came from, she simply answered "The hats are presents from the women in the poor's quarters."

On the third day of the general offensive in Saigon, a fair-complexioned girl clad in black with a red band on the left arm handed to Hoa a carbine and some cartridges, and said: "Congratulation! You are now a member of the Revolutionary Youth Union of Ho Chi Minh City!"

Nothing gave more pleasure to her than to have a rifle and fire at the enemy. Almost all her friends had become valiant fighters in Saigon streets from the first days of the uprisings. Hoa also distinguished herself on many occasions. Once, ambushing a Yankee in a street corner, she wounded him in the arm. His mates came to his rescue. Hoa hurled a hand grenade and killed four of them. Braving the enemy fire, she rushed onto the battlefield and mowed down adverse troops one by one.

Three days passed but Hoa had hardly time to see her mother. She waited till she bagged some more Yanks to come home and apologze for her "naughtiness."

TRAN THANH

Quotations

I want to tame high winds, ride on violent waves, kill the sharks in the China Sea and clear the borderland to save my people. I will not deign to follow the footsteps of those women who resign themselves to the condition of concubines.

TRIEU THI TRINH (Ba Trieu)
(IIIrd Century)

The mountains and rivers of Viet Nam belong to the Vietnamese King,
Her frontiers are so clearly defined in Heavens' book
You who come and invade her
Will see what disaster you will bring on yourselves.

LY THUONG KIET
(XIth Century)

I've lost the desire for sleep and food and my heart is rent and my eyes are crying bitter tears because of the frustration of not having been able to crush the enemy. I must accomplish this even if I had to die a hundred times on the battleground, with only a horse hide for shroud.

TRAN QUOC TUAN
(XIIIth Century)

I am not afraid of a rough and dangerous path
Though advanced in years, I have an iron will.
Righteousness sweeps away dense clouds
Calmness can level big mountains.

LE LOI
(XVth Century)

Military science teaches us that a humane person deploys a weaker force to neutralize a stronger one, a righteous man uses a smaller force to defeat a bigger one.

NGUYEN TRAI
(XVth Century)

The truth is that over the past decade, I have vanquished in the South and in the North. All my victories, I must confess, have been possible thanks to the unstinted support of my people.

NGUYEN HUE
(XVIIIth Century)

TET in Poulo-Condor

(From a Poulo Condor diary)

HOW fast the weather had changed! Over the past days the wind had been blowing into our jail a lot of red malabar almond leaves which fell pell-mell on the brick floor.

Outside the cells, the rising sun sent warm shafts of light through our windows.

We took off our jackets and took turns to bask in it. Flights of twittering swallows hovered in the sky.

When South Viet Nam is liberated what a lovely resort Poulo Condor will offer to the tourists! Here the landscape is magnificent and the seasons clearly distinct...

All of a sudden, Loi clapped his hands to hush us. From the opposite prison wards of detainees who had come one or two years before us the "Unity" song was heard sung to the rhythm of martial foot steps. "They are preparing for their spring festival while we have not finished our pow-wow!" said Loi.

That afternoon we passed a programme and a multi-claim petition, then appointed an adhoc committee.

Since that moment the place had been all in an unusual bustle.

We split into three groups: that of dances under myself, that of acting under Thanh from Ca Mau and that of drawing and film projection under Hoa from Ben Tre.

Late on the 28th of the 12th Lunar month when the turnkeys brought in our meals, Loi, our delegate handed them our petition and asked to see the authorities. Looking at the angry and apprehensive thug, we guessed that he had already handled similar petitions. "Secret instructions must have been going round the wards!" he exclaimed. Loi placidly answered, "Well, we, prisoners, have all modest wishes." The cop left with black looks on his face.

When we rehearsed our dances that evening, our delegate let us know that the protest of Ward 4 was going on while that of Ward 2 was growing fiercer. They had put forward basically similar demands.

Next day, the 29th, at meal-time the authorities invited the delegates of Ward 1 to a meeting to discuss our requests... Over half an hour later, we were told that they were granted. "I knew they would," said the policeman apologetically.

On the evening of the 30th, in our cleaned-up cell we observed some minutes of silence for our martyrs on this island and greeted in the New Year. Crowding together, we recalled the Tets of the resistance war against the French colonialists and of the dark times of underground activities. We reviewed our last year's struggle, made a record of the US-quisling crimes and pledged to behave as good revolutionary fighters and to uphold the tradition of indomitability handed down by our martyrs on this island. We sang at the top of our voices...

That night I could not sleep. I thought of my Tets when a child, after the General Insurrection (1946), when a youngster doing liaison work, after the restoration of peace (1955), when the GIs' hobnailed boots had not trampled upon our land... At one o'clock, with the gong announcing night watch, I set up. Our delegate shouted: "Attention! North turn!"

Outside the jail walls, crackers burst in the barracks and the streets which reminded us of the wide sky out there over the native land... and embittered our hatred for the US aggressors.

We drank water, ate our rice and sang with happiness, pride and confidence in to-morrow's victory.

On the morning of Lunar New Year's Day we saw Hoa the guard in his Sunday's best — blue pants, white shirts, red tie, trimmed hair combed shiny, with his mates also spruced up. These wolves in sheep's clothes tried to put on gentlemanly airs. We were allowed to play only within a line traced with whitewash around our wards. Pointing to it, Trong told the thugs: "We are like fish in a net, birds in a cage, cut off from our families for years. Nobody is closer to us than our jail-mates who share our weal and woe. Just think, how can this mark separate our hearts. What would you do if you were in our places?" The policemen could not say anything. When Hoa had finished opening Ward 2, Trong said: "If you don't mind, we'll visit our mates."

Like birds out of their cage, we shouted and rushed to hug each other then chatted and went to one ward after another. We told each other about our life in the past years, our struggle and our jail breaks, unmindful of the policemen's shouts. After over an hour of this, our delegate told us to return to our wards for the performance.

Beating time by clapping our hands, we sang "Unity" in chorus, rocking the whole Poulo Condor with our over one thousand voices under the very noses of the stunned bravos.

As the night wore on, the items became more interesting, attracting not only the prisoners but also the guards' families and functionaries on the island and the guards on duty.

They had never seen such performances as henchmen of the French and then of the Americans.

At noon, our meals included beef, pork, fresh cabbage... set on two long rows of tables. Seeing that we still waited, a policeman inquired: "What are you waiting for? Do you Viet Congs also worship?" All of a sudden we all stood up at a command from ward 7: "Attention! Let's keep a minute of silence for the memory of our martyrs on this island." The policemen were too surprised by our solemn mood to interfere and had to stand motionless under the sun. "Beaten" throughout this morning, the thugs now dropped their masks and lashed out in abuses and curses.

When night came our Ward 5 had a soirée among ourselves. Tru from Vinh Long declaimed "The Spirit" (of a revolutionary), a stirring poem whose effect was brought out by his clear voice. Then came the "Shattering our chains" pantomime representing workers and peasants united to wipe our the aggressors, the film "The Ben Tre Campaign"..., all of them warmly acclaimed.

Long into the night of the Lunar New Year's Day, we sat up singing, talking and attending performances. On the morning of the second, the guards increased the police force and kept us within the bounds. That afternoon, under pretext that we had established contacts between our wards, they confined us to our cells. Then in the afternoon of the third, they arrested two delegates of Ward 7. That night, we heard our mates of Ward 7 thumping on their doors to urge their release. We anticipated the guards' reprisals. As a matter of fact, in the small hours of the fourth, Hoa and Dau led many bravos against Ward 7, beating and seriously wounding over 30 of our mates.

The whole penitentiary rose up with the battlecries:

— Down with unwarranted beatings!

— Free Ward 7 arrested mates!

— Down with the totalitarian fascist regime!

The movement continued unabated during the first days of the lunar year...

LE TRAC

A HUMANE POLICY

FOLLOWING up Mr L.B. Johnson's "de-Americanization" of the Viet Nam war, Mr R. Nixon has advocated Vietnamization. In whatever terminology, the Viet Nam war has essentially been up to now a war of aggression of US imperialism.

"Vietnamization" which changes the complexion of the corpses, is on the one hand a fig leaf for the US colonialist war. On the other, US imperialism tries to use it to turn the antagonistic contradictions between the US aggressors and the Vietnamese people into differences between the various sections of the Vietnamese people and generate a strife between men of the same race and the same blood under the "anti-Communist" and "North-South conflict" labels. "Vietnamization" is to use Vietnamese to kill Vietnamese, to substitute Vietnamese blood for American blood in order to implement US neo-colonialism at the lowest cost.

"Vietnamization" of the war is the gist of the Guam doctrine dubbed the Nixon doctrine, which, applied to Asia consists in pitting Indochinese against Indochinese, Asians against Asians to help achieve the US imperialists' world hegemony.

However, for over a quarter of a century, in South Viet Nam, a small country of Southeast Asia, many war strategies of the French, Japanese and US imperialists have failed at the hands of a people known for their long-standing tradition of fighting foreign aggression.

In the Tran dynasty (1258-1288) after driving the Yuan invading army out of the country, a high mandarin handed to the King a chest containing the records of the collaborators with the enemy. The king had these documents burnt as, he said, they were stigmas of ignominy left by the aggressors.

The "Nixon doctrine" and "Vietnamization" is a snare set by US imperialism to allure a section of our young folk into betraying their Motherland by taking part in a protracted criminal war. That trap will in the long run be useless in the face of a people known for their leniency. The 10-point statement made by the PRG of RSVN on January 25, 1972 regarding the US-Thieu rule drafting our youths to serve as cannon-fodder is a light for the strays to go back onto the right path.

This statement spells out the generosity and profound sympathy of the revolution with those who have fallen victims to the enemy's scheme. Full of humanity and kindness, it exposes the viciousness of "Vietnamization" and thwarts the vicious design of the Nixon doctrine of playing off Vietnamese against Vietnamese. It shows the basis of a humane policy.

VAN THAN

BEST WISHES TO THE CPNLAF, LPLA AND VNPA

THEY DEFEND THEIR BELOVED ANGKOR TEMPLE

THE LAO PLA FIGHTERS ATTACK

DRVN «SILVER SWALLOWS» READY TO TAKE OFF

Embattled Springs

EACH coming of spring is heralded by flocks of swallows flying in the immense sky. This sight was recorded by our ancestors in the form of a *Lac* bird engraved on the *Ngoc Lu* brass drum. The swallow is seen darting like an arrow. For 4,000 years the bird has been dashing toward the radiant sun announcing spring to the Lac Hong people expert in farming and fighting.

The first spring of the Vietnamese came with the Lac bird a little earlier than the history of the Van Lang country founded by the kings Hung with stone axes, butterfly-shaped brass ploughs, copper arrows and knives. It was in the spring of early time that the green *banh chung* was initially cooked for Tet. Today in spring, we burn joss-sticks and bow before the altar of the Hung temple on the Hy Cuong hill:

Wherever you go,
Don't forget our forefather's anniversary on the 10th day of the Third month.

Moving his capital to Co Loa in the delta, An Duong Vuong founded the Au Lac country also in spring, as the legend has it. Today the Co Loa people say:

One may part from one's offsprings
But cannot forget the sixth day of the First month.

This anniversary is now observed in spring at the An Duong Vuong temple in the well-known Co Loa citadel and reminds us of the spring of Au Lac remote times.

If there were springs in which our nation was established with civilization shaped with our sweat and blood, there were also springs in which our people rose up to shake off the yoke of foreign aggressors.

In the Spring of 40 A.D., the Trung sisters led the inhabitants of the mouth of the Hat river in the Me Linh insurrection:

First to avenge their family,
Then to recover the legacy of the kings Hung.

with the participation of 65 citadels built all over the country, smashing the rule of the Eastern Han. Proconsul To Dinh was able to save his bacon and flee to Nam Hai by having his beard clipped and his head shaven.

In Spring 542, Ly Bi and the inhabitants of many districts swept away the Liang invaders. The following year, also in spring, the patriots repulsed the second counter offensive of the aggressors and set up the Van Xuan country in the next spring. This name sounded like a proclamation of independence and a charter of freedom, and reflected the unshakable will of our people for sovereignty and independence.

In Spring 939, after he had defeated the Southern Han invaders on the Bach Dang river, Ngo Quyen proclaimed himself king and set up his capital at Co Loa, ushering in a long period of independence, crowning one thousand years of unremitting struggle for independence and initiating a long era of freedom.

When the land faced the danger of invasion, there were springs of resistance and victory.

In Spring 981, Le Hoan and our people wiped out the Sung aggressors on the Bach Dang river and successfully defended Chi Lang citadel, safeguarding the independence of the country then called Dai Co Viet.

In Spring 1077, after enjoying Tet, our armed forces commanded by General Ly Thuong Kiet fought a fierce battle at Song Cau against the Sung who were put to flight at the end of the season.

In Spring 1258 (Mau Ngo Tet) our people under the Trans, repelled the Yuan army at Dong Bo Dau, northwest of Thang Long * after taking 25,000 casualties by drowning.

In Spring 1288, the Yuans invaded our country for the third time. Their generals were captured. Their fleet was sent to the bottom of the Bach Dang river like that of the Sung and Southern Han on the same waterway. With that defeat, the scheme of the Yuan-Mongols to include Viet Nam in their empire then covering all Asia, came to grief.

In Spring 1418 (Mau Than), Le Loi and Nguyen Trai rose up on the Lam Son mountain. That war for national liberation waged through ten years of untold difficulties and hardships ended in a brilliant victory in spring.

The domination of the Mings crumbled down and Viet Nam recovered her independence.

In the Spring of 1789, after spending the Ky Dau Tet on the road, the army of King Quang Trung (Nguyen Hue) rushed on Thang Long, overran the enemy posts of Ha Hoi and Ngoc Hoi and took Dong Da after a grim battle, wiping out hundreds of thousands of the Ch'ing invaders.

With that spring ended all invasion by the Northern feudalists.

A new era began in the spring of 1930 with the founding by Uncle Ho of a revolutionary party which took our country onto the path of Independence, freedom and socialism. That spring was followed by the Revolution in the autumn of 1945 and the Dien Bien Phu victory in the Summer of 1954, which swept French colonialism out of half of our beloved country.

Then came the spring of 1968, marked by the general offensive and concerted uprisings in Mau Than Tet during which the enemy came under fire everywhere in the South even in Saigon, the South Viet Nam NFL flags fluttered over the Hue city, heralding a new revolutionary period.

Spring 1971 has gone down in history with the campaign on Highway No 9 in which the liberation army together with the Lao brother people foiled Operation Lam Lon 719 of the Nixon doctrine.

4,000 years.

Many springs (in Viet Nam — then known under the names of Van Lang, Au Lac, Van Xuan, Dai Co Viet as above — have been springs of uprisings and struggle for independence and freedom of an unyielding people. After 4,000 years of civilization and victories, our people are now confronting US imperialism, the most barbarous enemy ever known in history; as shock troops we are entrusted by the world with the mission of defending with arms in hand the civilization of mankind.

* *Ancient name of Hanoi.*

King Quang Trung's Tet

"We were a coarse-clothed peasant from Tay Son. We owned not a square inch of land, had no ambition to become a king. It was only at the request of the people who wanted a good king to appear and save them from misfortune that we've recruited an army..."

THESE were the opening words of Nguyen Hue's message on his coronation as King Quang Trung, which conferred on him a legitimate capacity before the nation and history, and by which he personally took the command of a 100,000-strong army. He eventually led it in a sweeping march to the North where he put to rout 200,000 invading troops of the Ch'ing dynasty.

On the 20th day of the 12th month of Lunar Year Mau Than (1788) at Mount Tam Diep (Thanh Hoa province), as intelligence came on the over-whelming strength of the enemy, King Quang Trung said with a broad smile, "They are coming now to a tryst with death. My tactics has been already devised..." He then ordered his troops to rest and celebrate the Tet Festival in advance. "Today," he said, "let's enjoy the New Year's Day ahead of the calendar. We shall enter Thang Long after the beginning of spring and shall again commemorate Tet there. Mark my words, and you'll see that they will materialize!"

On the 30th day of the 12th month—New Year's Eve—King Quang Trung troops started on their forced march. They took turns to carry one another—two carrying one on a stretcher—literally in double time. Vi Hoang (Nam Dinh) was soon captured by them. On the 4th of the 1st month, at night, they arrived at the sector of Thang Long. Ha Hoi post was stormed by the advance units. The Chinese general, on receiving reports, could not conceal his surprise: "How extraordinary!" he exclaimed and jumped on an unsaddled horse and fled in the dark of night. The next day, at dawn, the first and second army corps of King Quang Trung made a junction and attacked Ngoc Hoi post. Shock troops marched in the van, with knives at their belts, and carrying straw-covered, bullet-proof, wooden planks. As they reached the post's gate, they laid down the boards and rushed on the enemy with their sharp knives, and blotted out the great Southern post of Thang Long Citadel. Khuong Thuong post on the South-Western flank of the Citadel, was surrounded by the third unit of Quang Trung's army and all its defenders were wiped out. Mount Dong Da became a graveyard for the invaders.

That day at noon King Quang Trung entered Thang Long on the back of an elephant.

The great battle for the liberation of Thang Long waged by the Tay Son army under the command of Nguyen Hue was a decisive operation of strategic significance. It covered an immense ground stretching from Phu Xuan (Hue) to the Red River delta. The enemy was engaged in fighting on a terrain 80 kilometers wide at the rate of one to two in troop strength, a legendary confrontation in which Nguyen Hue put out of action the totality of the adverse army.

The date was Spring of Ky Dau (1789), 180 years ago, or exactly 3 "Ky" according to the Lunar calendar. In the wake of the Chuong Duong and Bach Dang victories under the Trans, of the Chi Lang and Xuong Giang victories under the Les, the Thang Long battle won by Quang Trung will remain for ever as a symbol of our nation's undauntedness.

DO YOU KNOW?

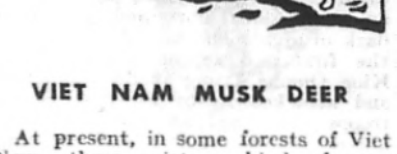
A PAKO ATHLETE

The slope was steep and slippery. Four strongly-built liberation fighters had done their best but could not carry a 200-pound gun barrel to the hilltop, nor could a buffalo.

A Thanh, 50, of the Pako nationality, a native of Phong Dien district, Thua Thien province, a porter in the liberation army since 1958, laid down his 180-pound basket of goods, and said, "Lift the barrel on my shoulders."

With all his muscles protruding, the old man negotiated the slope slowly and cautiously, one of his hands holding firm the barrel, the other clinging to the rope leading to the hilltop; all his mates looked intently at him with bated breath.

One hour later, the gun barrel was well in position. Group commander Cao warmly shook hands with A Thanh who was then surrounded by the young fighters congratulating him on his success.



VIET NAM MUSK DEER

At present, in some forests of Viet Nam, there exists a kind of very valuable musk deer having under their abdomens a sac of about 6 kgs of musk which can be smelled within a radius of 12 km.

This substance is used in the manufacture of many varieties of perfume, and of a drug in both Eastern and Western medicines.

A kilogram of musk costs more than a kilogram of gold.

"PACK BIKES" ON THE TRUONG SON RANGE

Truong Son is also known for a peculiar "army unit": the "men and women pack cyclists," who with their bicycles, carry goods to the front in bigger and bigger supplies. The most remarkable of these champion "pack-men" are Ba Toan, Bay Den (of Z unit) who have successively raised their loads from 500 to 700 pounds.

On top of the girl carriers is Huynh Kim Lan who can transport a 520-pound burden over a long distance.

The pack men who carry from 500 to 700 pounds make up for one-third of the unit.

A 4,000-YEAR-OLD VILLAGE

Members of the Archaeology Institute of the Viet Nam Social Sciences Board discovered in 1969 and 1970 on the Trang Kenh calcareous mountain range (Haiphong) a workshop turning out several kinds of stone tools and ornaments of the new stone age of a high craftsmanship. The archaeologists also found there tens of thousands of earthernware and stone implements, many house floors made of well-pressed clay, kitchens and graves of ancient people, and a number of utensils made of bone having rather peculiar shapes such as ax blades, arrowheads.

Researches have revealed that about 4,000 years ago, the pre-historic people lived on the Trang Kenh Range, a small stretch of land with high mountains near the river and the sea. They had a high technical level, a variegated economic and moral life.

A DONG THAP GENERAL

A tall man, stripped to the waist, stood before a group of insurrectionists. Slowly he lifted up four 120-pound dumb-bells and with his teeth raised the fifth one, to the general applause of the crowd.

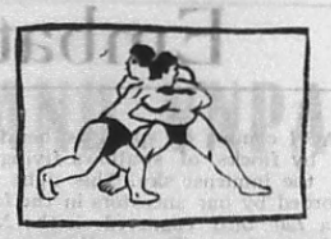
This feat of strength was performed in a jungle corner of the Plain of Reeds, and the man was Thien Ho Duong, or Vo Duy Duong, who was then venerated by the inhabitants as "Ngu linh thien ho" (The five dumb-bell giant).

After Truong Dinh's death in 1864, Thien Ho Duong became leader of the resistance against the French at Tien Giang (the Anterior River) and set up his base in the Plain of Reeds from where, for two years running, he harassed the aggressors at Cai Nua, Cai Be. In 1866, the French launch a big offensive against the base but were trounced by the troops of Thien Ho Duong who then moved to another resistance base.

VOI LU

There are now at Tieu Hoang hamlet (Tay Son village, Tien Hai district, Thai Binh province) two temples dedicated to the Voi Lu brothers who were two famous wrestlers.

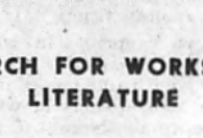
Legend has it that Voi Lu, the elder brother, had a three-knot spine, and could do the work of ten men; he could with one hand carry his adversary to the contest ground. He had no match in his time.



In spring, from Tra Lu, a locality in Nam Dinh province, a well-known wrestlers' group crossed the river for a bout with Voi Lu at Tieu Hoang. The match lasted for half a day but ended in a draw. In the afternoon, while he was minding his ox in a plain nearby, Voi Lu's younger brother heard of the drawn match and hurried home to enter the lists. As his ox walked too slowly, he had to carry it back on his shoulders.

After eating a basketful of apples, he defeated the Tra Lu wrestlers and saved Voi Lu's and his village's reputation.

The story was told by Cao Long, a 83-year-old wrestler, native of Tan Son village. Tieu Hoang hamlet is now known for its numerous sons fighting at the front against the US aggressors, and the wrestlers' families are prominent on the record.



SEARCH FOR WORKS OF LITERATURE

The Cultural Service of Thanh Hoa province has collected many folk works permeated with the anti-feudal and anti-imperialist spirit, and the multiform life, of the people of various minority nationalities, such as the "De Dat De Nuoc" (Build the Nation, Build the Land) epic, a collection of Muong and Thai sayings and folk songs, the Pon Pongs and tens of thousands of other folk songs, riddles and tales.

BRASS DRUMS

IN the study of the 4,000-year old Vietnamese civilization and building of the country, brass drums constitute cultural relics of great significance.

To date archaeologists have found about 100 brass drums big and small in many provinces in the north as well as in Kontum, Thu Dau Mot.., a concentration bigger than anywhere else in the world.

Most of our brass drums belong to the oldest kind, a characteristic of the Dong Son brass culture (2,000—3,000 years old). Dong Son brass drums are rated first class (according to the classification of the German scientist Heger). In this same class our archaeologists have unearthed five varieties of brass drums differing by their forms and designs. This shows an evolution in their making. Most beautiful and ancient are the Ngoc Lu (Ha Nam province), the Hoang Ha (Ha Tay province), then the Mieu Mon, the Phu Duy (Ha Dong province), the Huu Chung (Hai Duong province). The Dong Hieu (Nghe An province) is the biggest, while the Dong Van is the most recent of the Dong Son variety.

The Ngoc Lu brass drum is 63 centimetres high, and 79 centimetres in diametre. Found in 1902, it is now kept in the Hanoi Historical Museum. As brass melts at 700 — 900 degrees C., its manufacture bears evidence to the standard of our foundry. A scrutiny of the material reveals a fairly high proportion of lead apart from copper and tin. This is a scientific feat, for lead makes the alloy more fluid and the casting easy. That is why the elaborate decoration representing animals, plants and human activities on the drum is still now visible.

Tradition has it that each newly-turned-out brass drum was brought to the communal house where the entire population gathered for its inauguration. With a drumstick a beautiful girl then played the maiden round — a fine custom of ours which betokens our respect for women.

Brass drums were used in fighting, in ceremonies and in festivals. Their sounds galvanized the people and frightened the enemy. Here is one instance: after failing three times in their aggression against our country, the Mongols had to make peace. In 1201, the Mongol ambassador who arrived in Thang Long was scared stiff as shown in his following verses:

The sight of spears and swords makes your blood run cold,

The echoes of brass drums turn your hair grey!

The thunder of drums in the concerted uprisings by the South Viet Nam armed forces and people since Mau Than Lunar New Year (1968) has also struck panic into the hearts of countless US-Saigon troops. It will certainly continue to roll until final victory is won.

LE VY

MARCHING TO THE FRONT

A village with patriotic traditions

LENH, a pupil, had volunteered for the army. Before joining his unit, he wrote to me from his village Thuy Lieu:

"I am going to take part in the anti-US resistance. Only when the American aggressors are driven out of our country shall I come back to my village. We'll have plenty of time to chat. The finishing touch has been put to the village Museum of Patriotic Traditions, the house you wished for. We, volunteers are gathering here, in this place, before going to camp. We are proud of being the children of a village that distinguished itself during the formers resistance to the French colonialists. We want to continue our fathers' traditions of heroism. Please, pay a visit to my village though I won't be at home. Within ten years, it has undergone many changes, being built into a co-operative. My fellow-villagers like to meet you again."

OF COURSE I went back to Thuy Lieu. I went straight to the village Museum whose building I had wished for fifteen years ago.

A local cadre boasted to me:

"From this Museum, over one thousand young men of my village have been sent off to the fight against the US aggressors. Their ranks get bigger and bigger."

Both of us were happy, because his village had contributed many men to the front and because the people of this littoral had acquired a higher revolutionary consciousness.

For four thousand years, the Vietnamese people have overcome almost insurmountable trials, repelled powerful aggressors to keep their place in the sun. The Thuy Lieu Museum can testify to it. If our people can survive, it is because they have learnt lessons of militancy from the past generations. They have faced extraordinarily violent floods and typhoons, bitter days of famine, lethal American bombings. They have lived and won for in their veins runs a heroic blood.

I shook the warm hand of the village cadre to thank him. Through him, I wanted to thank over one thousand young men of Thuy Lieu, Bach Sa, Xuan Lai, Chan Hung... engaged in the patriotic struggle. What will they give to their Museum?

Nguyen Van Trieu had just seen his two sons off to the army. At the end of the village, he recommended them to try hard and bring back decorations for the village Museum.

This fan of the Museum added:

"I have told my boys to do so. They have promised me many things. It's only a matter of course. They are young, they want to achieve exploits to follow in the steps of Nguyen Van Troi and Le Ma Luong... We are getting old. Any parents like to have exemplary children. If mine, Moc and Loc, are awarded medals, I'll propose to have these exhibited at the Museum."

Many young men of Thuy Lieu have won praise for their village. From example Tran Van Nhieu.

At 17, Nhieu eagerly asked to join up. His father said to him:

"You are only 17, and as thin as a lath. You are not fit for military service, my boy! How can you stand the hardships?"

He replied:

"Physical strength doesn't matter. With a high morale one can endure any hardship and work wonders. One can even break into Thieu's Palace of Independence when necessary."

The father filed repeated requests at the village Administrative Committee. Nhieu was finally accepted.

One fine Autumn afternoon, the young soldier came back to his village on leave, more handsome than ever with a bright star on his hat and a medal shining on his breast.

Through his battle accounts, the father was convinced that the lad, true to the traditions of his village, was resolved to fight till his last breath for the country.

A party was thrown in honour of Nhieu, in the yard in front of the Museum. People flowed from nearby hamlets. In a splendid moonlight, a village cadre commended the young fighter who related his achievements.

"We always think of the way our fathers behaved before us, of their long struggle," concluded Nhieu. "I am proud of being a son of a hamlet which, after a heroic resistance to the French colonialists, has resolutely participated in the struggle against the American aggressors. To-morrow, I'll have to go back to the fireline. I promise you, as long as I live, I shall fight and win."

Over the past days, news of battles won had been pouring from everywhere, from the Plain of Jars, Long Cheng, Central Viet Nam, South Viet Nam... US aircraft had been downed and US pilots captured in North Viet Nam.

These tidings were urgent calls to the youths who said to each other:

"Great battles are being fought. If we do not enlist immediately, we'll miss the opportunity!"

The sons of Mrs Diem, Mr Dan, Mr Thao... also set off, their packs on their backs.

It was far on in the night. Streams of people came out of the Museum. It was getting chilly on the wet stony paths. But everybody felt warm when thinking of the contributions of his village to the resistance.

It was a Spring morning. Red flags were fluttering in the sunshine, on the banks of canals. A new batch of young volunteers left the Thuy Lieu Museum of Patriotic Traditions. As the wind was whispering in the sandal-trees, they marched on the road, singing songs of victory.

LU GIANG

EXCLUSIVE PAGE FOR PRESIDENT NIXON

Nixon puppet shock units on US choppers skids

Butch Mayfield: He left his leg in Indochina for Nixon who thanked him by arresting him in an anti-war demonstration

Anti-war poster in the USA

In the USA...

... Plain of Jars (Laos)

... Tchenla I and II (Cambodia)

à la nixon

The bonze, Nixon and the dog

DO you know the story of that absent-minded Vietnamese ?
Here it is.

One day a phenomenal absent-minded guy, who used to sleep as a log too, was hoaxed by practical jokers. They clad him with a buddhist monk tunic, cropped his hair close, and transported him to a pagoda. On waking, he wondered whether he had become a bonze, without his knowing it. To get the bottom of this, he had the idea of returning home, leaving the whole thing to the judgement of his dog. If the latter barked at him, he would become another man. Catching a distant sight of the guy in queer garb, the dog yelped furiously. Turning on his heel, our absent-minded concluded :

— Agreed ! I am no longer me ! There remains the only thing : to disappear !

The today's version of the story concerns a certain Mr Nixon, President of the United States. Known by the whole world as an inveterate hawk, he does not stop showing himself as a dove, drawing in his claws, putting on the feather of the peaceful bird, and learning to coo. Under this disguise, there he is coming home to put his dog to the test. Alas ! the animal recognizes him at once, jumps at him, wagging frenziedly its tail !

Nixon is left with the only alternative : returning to his flat at the White House.

CHÔNG TRE